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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 002476

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STATE FOR SA/INS  
LONDON FOR POL - GURNEY  
NSC FOR MILLARD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/18/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: GOVERNMENT REACTION TO CAPTURE OF SADDAM  
HUSSEIN

Classified By: Classified by DCM Robert K. Boggs. Reason: 1.5 (b, d).

[11.](#) (SBU) The December 16-19 visit to Kathmandu of Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca to Nepal

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provided an opportunity for a range of high-ranking government officials and others to convey their congratulations on the capture of Saddam Hussein. Many welcomed the news as a promising omen of greater peace and stability in Iraq. Media reaction is being conveyed septel.

[12.](#) (C) In a December 18 discussion with A/S Rocca and the Ambassador, King Gyanendra expressed his congratulations on the capture. Meeting A/S Rocca and the Ambassador on December 16, Ambassador-at-large Bekh Bahadur Thapa, who is Nepal's de facto Foreign Minister, congratulated the USG on the event, which he described as a "success" that the Government of Nepal (GON) hopes will bring peace. Foreign Secretary Madhu Raman Acharya also characterized the capture

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as a "success," but acknowledged that the road to peace in Iraq remains difficult. At a December 17 luncheon, Finance Minister Dr. Prakash Lohani, Information Minister Kamal Thapa, and Education and Commerce Minister Hari Bahadur Basnet, each conveyed his congratulations to the Assistant Secretary and the Ambassador on the former Iraqi dictator's

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apprehension. Also on December 17, Chief of Army Staff Gen. Pyar Jung Thapa opened his meeting with A/S Rocca and the Ambassador by hailing the successful capture.

[13.](#) (SBU) The positive reaction has not been limited to GON officials. In a private conversation with A/S Rocca and the Ambassador on December 18, former Prime Minister and head of the Nepali Congress (Democratic) Sher Bahadur Deuba asked the A/S to convey his congratulations on Saddam's apprehension to USG officials in Washington.

MALINOWSKI